



Sharsheret®

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Genetics for Life Symposium Highlights Breast Cancer Among Sephardic Women

While there is still debate as to whether general breast cancer rates are higher among Jewish women as compared to women in the general population, research scientists have determined that Ashkenazi Jewish women have an increased genetic susceptibility to breast cancer. In 2004, the New York Breast Cancer Study, the result of a long-term research project, was released with serious ramifications for Jewish women. The study suggested that for those who carry either BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations, the likelihood of developing breast cancer may be as high as 59-82%. This is a striking statistic for Jewish women, as 1 in 40 women of Ashkenazi descent carries a genetic mutation. Since the study's release, breast cancer genetics has become the single most urgent topic for women calling Sharsheret. In response, Sharsheret's **Genetics for Life** program provides materials and resources to address the

concerns of hereditary breast cancer, including the "Breast Cancer Genetics and the Jewish Woman" resource booklet, a Genetic Counselor Hotline, and medical symposia.

Sharsheret's 2008 spring symposium, "Breast Cancer Genetics and the Sephardic Jewish



Symposium presenters
Harry Ostrer, MD (left) and Ruth Oratz, MD.

Woman," presented at the Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn, New York, addressed the impact of hereditary breast cancer on Jewish women of Sephardic descent, an area of breast cancer genetics that

had received little prior attention. Symposium speakers included Ruth Oratz, MD, FACP (The Women's Oncology & Wellness Practice) and Harry Ostrer, MD (Professor of Pediatrics, Pathology, and Medicine and Director of the Human Genetics Program in the Department of Pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine).

Topics addressed at the Symposium

- The risk for hereditary breast cancer in the Sephardic community.
- Shared mutations among Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews.
- Genetic counseling and genetic testing for BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations.

The symposium was funded by a generous grant from the New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and was sponsored by the Sephardic Community Center, Medstar, and the Sephardic Bikur Holim. A free DVD of the event is available for order and a written transcript of the event can be downloaded on Sharsheret's website, www.sharsheret.org. For more information, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

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A Message From the Founder Celebrating Milestones



Dear Friends,

This year, I was blessed to celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of my oldest son. I recall vividly the day I was diagnosed with breast cancer 7 years ago and the prayer I kept repeating that I would live to witness my children, then 3 and 5 years old, celebrate the milestones that we all cherish – birthdays, graduations, weddings.

At Sharsheret, we are so grateful to all of you who share your milestones with us. Whether you are including Sharsheret in your Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration, running a race with Team Sharsheret for the first time, or establishing a Jewel in honor of a loved one, we are privileged to be a part of your special event. We know, firsthand, how very meaningful each and every milestone can be.

As we embark on another year of critical programming at Sharsheret, we wish you and your family the celebration of many milestones in the years ahead.

Warm regards,

Rochelle L. Shoretz
Founder

A Message From the Director of Operations Facing Our Future



Dear Friends,

This past year has been marked by tremendous change in the world around us. We all face some uncertainty of what is yet to come.

At Sharsheret, we look ahead toward this next year with confidence and hope for the future. Sharsheret's success in serving the Jewish community is strengthened each and every day by the women and men across the country who give their time and their talents to ensure that we can meet the growing needs of the women we serve. We remain committed to ensuring that Sharsheret's programs and services are accessible to all Jewish women facing breast cancer nationwide.

In this issue, you will hear incredible stories from the women of Sharsheret and the steps they have taken to protect their future – from traditional coping methods, to the most modern medical procedures, and beyond. You will learn about the urgent concern for Jewish women to understand the impact of family history on their own lives and the lives of their daughters, and some day, their granddaughters. You will read about Sharsheret's Genetics for Life program, addressing the hundreds of queries regarding genetic counseling and testing that Sharsheret receives, where results can affect the course of action a woman may choose to pursue as she plans for the future.

You will also read about the energy created from Sharsheret's partnerships with AEPi, Hillel, and Chabad on campus nationwide. You will learn how we are training students to act as breast cancer awareness advocates and educating them about breast care and early detection. Sharsheret's outreach to students on campus is empowering the young Jewish women of the next generation – our future.

We are grateful to all those who contributed to Sharsheret's growth. We thank our past Executive Director, Eillene Leistner, for her time and efforts in helping Sharsheret expand and reach thousands of Jewish women across the country facing breast cancer. With the guidance of our Board of Directors, Advisory Boards, committed staff, dedicated volunteers, and friends like you, we will continue to strengthen Sharsheret's programs and services to ensure a safe and supportive community for all young Jewish women facing breast cancer today, and in the future.

Very truly yours,

Elana Silber
Director of Operations

Empowering Jewish Women Facing Breast Cancer

Sharsheret Link Carol Mallison of Jackson Heights, New York, describes finding the right support in Sharsheret's Empower program.



“Sharsheret has meant the world to me. Five years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 39 and was single and devastated. How could this happen to me? Who gets breast cancer at that age? At the time, I thought there were no other women who were survivors in my situation. A young Jewish breast cancer survivor, with whom I had a chance meeting at a lecture, suggested that I call Sharsheret. I checked out the Sharsheret website and called almost immediately. The staff at Sharsheret had a wealth of information for me. Just like any other single Jewish woman my age, I wanted to know about working, dating, and having a family after surviving breast cancer. Sharsheret connected me with several different Links who had gone through similar experiences. I was not alone in my experience anymore. Each of the Links with whom I spoke took their time and answered all my questions, whether it was about what they had experienced when they searched for a job or about the possibility of adopting a child. Knowing that each Link with whom I had spoken had been through a similar situation, had similar desires, and set goals they had actually achieved after breast cancer, gave me enormous hope. Now I could do the same thing. I would not only survive breast cancer, but strive for the goal of reaching my dreams.

By nature, I like helping people in whatever way I can, so it was a natural for me to become a Link for Sharsheret. I was delighted at the possibility of helping someone else, but I was a little nervous about whether I would be able to do it. Would I know the right things to say? Sharsheret's Link Training Teleconference and training manual for Links put my mind at ease. Afterwards, I had several lovely conversations with single women who were undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Whether they were concerned about chemo, temporary hair loss, or radiation treatments, they could ask me what I had been through and amazingly it seemed to ease their worries. I found the experience of being a Link tremendously rewarding. It truly made my day each time someone said it made them feel better to have spoken with me.

The beauty of being a Link is that the person on the other end of the phone can feel free to express their mind freely, because the Link understands. Links can choose not to meet or they can become friends. I have had both experiences. One of my Links and I became friends, but whether or not that happens, it is still a really special experience.

Empower (a Sharsheret program for Jewish women without partners facing breast cancer) teleconferences were amazing experiences for me as well. I found that sitting in the safe comfortable environment of my home, I could concentrate on informed, expert individuals who were speaking about issues such as dating or other topics that were really important to me. It gave me the opportunity to take notes, formulate questions for further research, and use the knowledge that I gained. One of the great features of the teleconferences is that everyone can still read the transcripts later on at their leisure on the Sharsheret website.

The very best thing about Sharsheret is knowing there is always someone to turn to who will listen and who knows what you are going through because they, too, have gone through it. No young breast cancer survivor ever needs to feel alone, no matter what turns life takes.”

Empower Teleconferences

Sharsheret hosted its second annual **Empower** teleconference, “The Jewish Holidays and Renewal,” in September 2008. The teleconference featured a presentation by Rachel Lerner, MS (psychotherapist, private practice) who addressed the spiritual and emotional issues faced by Jewish women living with breast cancer during the holidays. “I want to encourage all of you to be self-honoring,” said Ms. Lerner. “Wherever you are in your journey, wherever you're going, whatever happens, your journey is meaningful because *you* matter.” The teleconference was presented as part of **Empower**, a Sharsheret program designed to address the support needs of Jewish women without partners facing breast cancer.

Now available: “Believe,” a CD by Suffy Rudman, 2009 Lisa Altman Volunteer Tribute Award Recipient, with proceeds to benefit Sharsheret.

To order your copy, please visit www.suffyrudman.com.



For more information about **Empower** and upcoming teleconferences, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail events@sharsheret.org.

Surviving Breast Cancer

Sharsheret Link Naomi Lerner of West Orange, New Jersey (pictured with her daughter Donna Ra'anan-Lerner) describes how she connects with Sharsheret after her journey through breast cancer.



In January 1991, a few weeks after celebrating my daughter's first birthday, I was diagnosed with Stage II cancer in my right breast. One evening, I was changing the baby and, as babies do, she began to kick. Her little foot hit me in the chest and it hurt. Instinctively,

I rubbed the spot where I'd been kicked and felt a lump. I met with a breast surgeon the next day. I gave him my family history – both my father and his father had been diagnosed with breast cancer – and he examined me. Without even doing a mammogram, he scheduled surgery three days later. A few hours after the procedure, a lumpectomy, I was informed that the pathology report indicated the tumor was malignant. Until then, I had never had a mammogram and thought myself, at the age of 34, way too young to be worried about breast health. My baby had saved my life.

I spoke with two oncologists about adjunct therapy. The first oncologist was somber. He told me that I had a particularly aggressive type of cancer and predicted a recurrence in my left breast within two years. He felt it imperative that I start chemotherapy immediately. He advised that I forget about getting pregnant again – at least for 10 years. Thankfully, I met with another doctor who calmed me down and told me that the first doctor was mistaken – I did not have a 'particularly aggressive' type of cancer. He even told me that we could discuss having another baby in two years. Here's a bit of very good advice that came from my brother-in-law: choose a doctor with whom you feel comfortable and can talk to, because you want that person to be your doctor for many years. I chose the second oncologist and it was an excellent match.

In those first days following my diagnosis, what I wanted most was to speak to a woman who was healthy 10 years post-diagnosis. I felt that it would give me hope of survival. True, I was supported by close friends who wanted to help, but I found myself consoling them more often than they consoled me. I didn't want to burden my friends and my family. Maybe part of it was, not wanting to verbalize my fears and admit I was 'sick.' That was a mistake. There is nothing wrong in reaching out for help when you truly need it.

What is so compelling about Sharsheret is its Link Program. The ability to speak to a woman who has experienced what you're experiencing and who can listen and understand in a way your closest friend, mother, or spouse cannot is empowering. It gives you hope at a time that you are overwhelmed with feelings of hopelessness. It allows you to express your fears without worrying about burdening someone you love.

Sharsheret also addresses issues unique to Jewish women and those issues really do exist. Passover fell that year right around the time I was having my second course of chemotherapy. I was feeling awful and unable to prepare my house properly. But with no choice, we simply ate off of paper plates and used plastic flatware. Not that I was eating much. I was sick on the way to the seder, during the seder, and on the way home. I couldn't put matzo in my mouth. A year later, when I put the Passover dishes away, I made a list of all the dishes and put it inside the dish carton, so if I didn't 'make it' another year, my husband wouldn't have a problem sorting things out.

Well, hard as it was, I got through chemotherapy and the follow-up radiation therapy was a breeze. At first, I visited my doctor once every three months. Eventually, that was reduced to twice a year with an annual mammogram. At my visit in October 1992, my doctor asked me if I still wanted another baby, and I said of course I did. Eleven months later, my second daughter was born. When she turned 12, and was ready to choose a Bat Mitzvah project, she decided to collect donations and cosmetics in support of Sharsheret's programs and services. She very proudly brought the contributions and cosmetics she collected to the Sharsheret office herself. I can think of no project more fitting and meaningful."

Focus on Family

The diagnosis of breast cancer in a partner, daughter, sister, or mother can be difficult and overwhelming for family members. In response to concerns expressed by caregivers, Sharsheret offers the **Family Focus** program. Family Focus guides family members and caregivers through treatment and beyond and provides resource materials, including the Resource Series booklet "The Jewish Family Facing Breast Cancer" as well as a DVD of the Sharsheret symposium, "The Jewish Family Facing Breast Cancer: You Are Not Alone." Family Focus also offers the "Ask Sharsheret" Phone Line on which Sharsheret representatives address questions regarding the care of a loved one. "When family members hear that a wife, daughter, sister, or mother has been diagnosed with breast cancer, they are often overwhelmed with a rush of helpless anxious feelings," said Clinical Supervisor Shera Dubitsky. "Family Focus provides ways to strengthen the family support system and addresses the unique challenges and concerns faced by Jewish families fighting breast cancer."

Ask Sharsheret!

If you are supporting a loved one through breast cancer and have your own concerns, call the "Ask Sharsheret" Phone Line to speak with a staff counselor. The "Ask Sharsheret" Phone Line addresses the support needs of spouses, partners, parents, and other family members of women facing breast cancer. Call toll-free (866) 474-2774 to get answers to your questions today.

Sharsheret National Teleconferences Address Unique Concerns of Jewish Women Facing Breast Cancer

Survivorship Teleconference

Sharsheret's Fall 2008 medical teleconference, "Surviving Breast Cancer: Facing the Challenge," addressed the long-term side effects of breast cancer treatments, emerging research, life after treatment, and the impact of breast cancer on the cultural practices of Jewish women. Speakers included Ruth Oratz, MD, FACP (The Women's Oncology & Wellness Practice), Tessa Cigler, MD, MPH (Assistant Professor of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medical Center, Attending Physician, New York-Presbyterian Hospital), Shelley Lewis, Author of "[five lessons I didn't learn from breast cancer (and One Big One I Did)]," and Shera Dubitsky, MEd, MA (Clinical Supervisor, Sharsheret).

"Survivorship has become an important subject of recent research, as more women live longer lives beyond breast cancer treatment," said Ms. Dubitsky. "Sharsheret's survivorship teleconference empowered women calling Sharsheret for support with critical information they can use on the new journey that begins when treatment ends." As one participant explained, "The speakers didn't just resonate with my experience. It WAS my experience." More than 90 women from 13 states participated in the teleconference.

"Get Connected" Link Training Teleconference

Breast cancer survivors interested in volunteering as Sharsheret Links – peer supporters in Sharsheret's national **Link Program** – can participate in free teleconference training sessions. The "Get Connected" teleconferences are designed to highlight the guidelines of the Link Program, identify critical breast cancer resources, and introduce the volunteer opportunities available to Sharsheret's Links and Callers. The teleconferences are conducted twice a year and include a simulated Caller/Link role play and a question and answer session with Sharsheret's Clinical Supervisor.

More than 700 women from 37 states across the country participate in Sharsheret's **Link Program**, which pairs women facing breast cancer with volunteers who can offer culturally-sensitive peer support. Callers are matched on a one-to-one basis with a Link who can address their specific concerns. "The support that I received from my Link when I was diagnosed was invaluable and I want to pay it forward," said a Sharsheret Link. "I hope that I can have the same impact on the life of another woman living with breast cancer as my Link had on mine."

To view complete transcripts of Sharsheret teleconferences, please visit www.sharsheret.org and click on Events and Transcripts.

To learn more about joining the Link Program, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

Sharsheret Educates Breast Cancer Support Group Leaders

Sharsheret Supports, a new initiative of Sharsheret's **Education and Outreach Program**, is a national model for local support groups designed to educate facilitators and assist in the establishment of local support groups. Sharsheret Supports offers a Support Group Leader's Guide detailing step-by-step instructions on how to begin and sustain a culturally-sensitive breast cancer support group for Jewish women, a DVD introducing the unique concerns of Jewish women facing breast cancer, and the consulting services of a Sharsheret representative who can train local support group leaders or lead a sample support session.

The Dallas, Texas Jewish Family Service Breast Cancer Support Group was the first group to utilize the training service offered through Sharsheret Supports. JFS Social Worker and support group leader Beth Broodo invited Clinical Supervisor Shera Dubitsky to co-facilitate a breast cancer survivors group with 22 participants. Ms. Dubitsky presented a seminar addressing the unique needs of

women and their families touched by breast cancer to JFS Board of Directors, staff, and benefactors, conducted clinical training for JFS staff, and co-facilitated a second support group. "Thank you so much for sending Shera to Dallas. She touched a lot of hearts and made a huge difference," said Ms. Broodo. "She made us laugh and cry and love her and love Sharsheret."

To bring Sharsheret Supports to your community, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.



Beth Broodo of Jewish Family Service in Dallas, Texas.

Facing Hereditary Breast Cancer

My Miracle Baby: Sharsheret Link Deena Kobell of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (pictured with her daughter Eve), describes the impact of breast cancer genetics on her journey to become a mother. An active peer supporter, Deena shares her incredible experience with other women in Sharsheret's Link Program grappling with the issues of breast cancer genetics and fertility after breast cancer treatment.



I am the proud mother of a 24 month-old baby girl who some have called a “miracle baby.” This miracle had its basis in some of the most advanced medicine being practiced today. My journey to become a mother began in April 2001, when at the age of 29, I learned that

I had Stage II breast cancer, and that I was a carrier of the BRCA1 genetic mutation. Since my tumor was very aggressive, and because I was so young, my doctors recommended that I immediately undergo a lumpectomy followed by six months of chemotherapy and then radiation treatment. They also strongly encouraged me to have an oophorectomy (ovary removal) as soon as possible. Although it seemed inconceivable at the time, I informed my medical team that I hoped to have children someday. They told me there was no time to do any fertility preservation and that I would have to roll the proverbial dice where my fertility was concerned. While there was almost no data on precisely what impact the prescribed chemotherapy would have on my fertility, it was certain to have some impact, and there was a chance that I would become infertile as a result. Since my tumor was negative for estrogen and progesterone receptors, they told me that if I was still cancer-free three years after the completion of my treatment, I could safely start trying to conceive, but that it would be prudent to have my ovaries removed as close to the age of 35 as possible in order to gain the most benefit from their removal.

Fortunately, my cancer did not return, and in March 2004, three years after I completed cancer treatment, I began fertility treatment. I tried to conceive for over a year. However, because I was unable to conceive, and was almost 35 years old, I decided it was time to move on to in-vitro fertilization (IVF) so that I could proceed with my oophorectomy as soon as possible.

I wrote to physicians and geneticists in the U.S. and abroad, inquiring as to whether it would be possible to test the resulting embryos for the BRCA1 gene so that I could avoid passing it on to my child(ren), as each child would have a 50% chance of inheriting the gene. After being told by numerous geneticists and physicians that such testing was simply not possible in the U.S. for various legal, cost, and logistical reasons, I learned that there was one geneticist who had recently secured permission from Myriad Laboratories, the company owning the patent to the genetic sequence for the BRCA mutations, to perform pre-implantation genetic diagnosis on embryos for the BRCA1 mutation.

Within a few months, and after analyzing blood samples from my entire immediate family (including my sister's DNA, which I brought back from Israel in a vial in my pocket), the genetics team had developed a genetic prototype to assist them in finding the abnormality in the embryos, and we were on our way. In April 2005, I underwent IVF, and was fortunate to have had a successful stimulation with 15 embryos that were fertilized. My embryologists carefully removed a single cell from each of the embryos, and three geneticists worked around-the-clock for 19 hours to locate the gene abnormality in each of the cells. The geneticist explained that this was akin to looking through 3,000 sets of the Encyclopedia Britannica to find one missing letter. Incredibly, they were able to get conclusive results on eight of the ten embryos. Of those eight, four were affected with the BRCA1 gene and four were not – exactly the rate of incidence of the gene. My fertility doctor then implanted the most viable embryos that were unaffected with the BRCA1 gene, and nine days later, I received the wonderful news that I was pregnant!

In December 2006, I gave birth to a healthy baby girl, who I named Eve Helena, after my mother, Helen Evelyn. As planned, I had my oophorectomy about a year after she was born. As a cancer survivor, assuming that I was even lucky enough to be able to conceive, I had always struggled with the competing desires to experience bringing another life into this world and the fear that this life would have to endure the same awful disease that my mother, my aunt, and I had endured.

I was fortunate to have had the support of the staff at Sharsheret during my entire journey. Rochelle Shoretz founded Sharsheret, and I discovered it, at about the same time that I was diagnosed. During the last seven years, I have had the pleasure to serve as a Link and found great comfort as well as a sense of purpose from my frequent conversations with other young Jewish breast cancer survivors. For me, sharing my experiences, thoughts, fears, frustrations, and hopes was a necessary part of my recovery process. I thank Sharsheret for being there for me, and for the many women like me, who no longer have to feel alone in their journeys.”

The information contained in this article is intended to provide general information about breast cancer and breast health and should not be construed as an endorsement or recommendation of any medical or treatment intervention. All medical information should be discussed with a health care professional.

Concerned about hereditary breast cancer?

Sharsheret can help. To learn about Sharsheret's Genetics for Life program and to speak with a Genetic Counselor, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

Living With Advanced Breast Cancer

Toby Mayer of East Brunswick, New Jersey, describes the impact of Embrace, a Sharsheret program supporting young Jewish women living with advanced breast cancer.

“**W**hen I was first diagnosed with early stage breast cancer, I found Sharsheret to be an invaluable tool, especially the **Link Program**. I did not feel so alone, knowing and speaking with women who “walked the walk.”

When the cancer returned, not surprisingly, I was devastated. Diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, I turned to Sharsheret, once again. That was my introduction to the **Embrace** program and Shera Dubitsky, Sharsheret’s Clinical Supervisor. I found Shera to be so supportive and understanding, a great sounding board, and someone who is always able to help me reframe issues so that I am able to move from despair to dealing. There are times we have the most sober and even somber conversations and then segue into humor – a funny story. We are able to switch between the two seamlessly. Shera has been a friend, compassionate and available.

When I was no longer able to “pass” as a healthy person 19 months after being diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, I sent out the e-mail below to my friends to let them in on what was going on. Since writing this e-mail, it’s been a tough bout. Fortunately, I have been around to celebrate my son’s Bar Mitzvah, my daughter’s graduation from high school, and my home is once again a place where my children’s friends congregate. Thank G-d, there’s been a turn around. I’m feeling a whole bunch better.”



Sharsheret Clinical Supervisor Shera Dubitsky provides telephone counseling for Embrace participants.

Not Another Chain Letter

I consider all of you friends and would like you to hear the following news from me, a reliable source who knows the facts rather than relying on hearsay.

As many of you have noticed, I have not been attending many social functions, basically dropping out of sight. Unfortunately, there is ample reason for this. 19 months ago I was diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer, meaning that the cancer is in places other than my breasts and is not curable, but is treatable.

You may wonder why I chose now to reveal my situation. As you all know, I am a very private person and until now, I did not feel compelled to make things public. Unfortunately, as my situation deteriorates, I no longer have the option of keeping things quiet. Currently, I have difficulties walking and often experience “loopiness” due to the vast amount of medication I am on.

I know this community and its remarkable reputation for helping those in need. If you would like to reach out to assist my family and me, the following are ways you can help:

Things that I would appreciate today: think of me in your prayers and Psalms.

Things I will appreciate in the future but do not require now, as I hope to be self-sufficient for a while: going to the cleaners, picking up challah for Shabbat, food shopping, help with carpool commitments.

Things that I would appreciate NOT to be done:

- Please do not ask me how I am doing if you see me in public; if I got myself together to be in the public domain, please let me enjoy forgetting about my illness for a while.
- If I tell you “no, thank you” please do not take it personally but I really do mean “no, thank you” for that particular time – I assure you that I will call upon you at some time in the future when I do need your help, whether it be to run an errand, make food, etc.
- Please do not use my children as a conduit to inquire about my health nor ask them how they are doing. We are all coping as well as we can be expected.

I hope you understand that it will be impossible for me to answer each e-mail I receive. I will try to send out a group e-mail with frequent updates. I am sure this is not what you expected when you opened this e-mail. Thank you for your love, concern, and respect for our method of dealing with this very difficult situation.

Hugs, Toby

Embrace: Supporting young Jewish women living with advanced breast cancer

Sharsheret’s Embrace program provides one-on-one professional counseling over the phone, a monthly telephone-based support group, and resources for Jewish women living with advanced breast cancer.

For more information, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

Sharsheret Celebrations

2008 Annual Benefit Luncheon

More than 450 guests honored the mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends that have touched the lives of breast cancer survivors at Sharsheret's annual Benefit Luncheon in May 2008, held at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe. Sharsheret recognized the strong dedication and valuable contributions of Guest of Honor Rifky Atkin. Rifky, who has been involved with Sharsheret since its inception, shared her feelings about serving as a Link to young women living with breast cancer. "I know how important an organization like Sharsheret can be, because I also know what it's like NOT to have Sharsheret to turn to. As a Sharsheret Link, I am matched with women whose diagnosis is similar to the one I received, and whose fears and vulnerability I can identify with." Sirena Silber, recipient of the Lisa Altman Volunteer Tribute Award, was recognized for her volunteer efforts, which helped Sharsheret raise funds and awareness to support Jewish women facing breast cancer and brought



(Left to right): 2008 Benefit Chair Sharon Herenstein, Lisa Altman Volunteer Tribute Award Recipient Sirena Silber, Guest of Honor Rifky Atkin, Benefit Chair Alissa Zagha, and Benefit Chair Joyce Austein.

Sharsheret to Westchester, New York. The Benefit Luncheon also featured a raffle, a silent auction, and an introduction to Sharsheret's new programs and resources.



Sharsheret Board of Directors (left to right): Jacob Plotsker, Keith Mendelson, Dana Norris, Sherry Cohen, Rochelle Shoretz, Lauryn Weiser, Naomi Spira, Ariel Schochet, and Jonathan Mirsky (Amy Mines Tadelis and Nikki Sausen not pictured).

Fun With Fashion at Neiman Marcus

Sharsheret celebrated with over 120 women at the second annual Fun With Fashion event at Neiman Marcus in Paramus, New Jersey, in November 2008. The show and luncheon highlighted the newest fashion trends and raised awareness about young Jewish women facing breast cancer and critical funds to support Sharsheret's national

programs and services. For more information about planning a Sharsheret fundraising event in your community, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail events@sharsheret.org.



Committee members (left to right): Nancy Dweck, Suzanna Breit, Sharona Schochet, Amy Elfman, Rosalyn Sausen, Sara Leffel, Shanna Wolf, Linda Gruenbaum, Joanne Zayat, and Sharon Kolb.



Committee members Elisa Wietschner (left) and Alissa Zagha.



(Left to right): Tammy Chesner, Banji Ganchrow, Judy Nachamie, Jill Katz, and Orly Krause.

Save the Date!

Sharsheret Annual Benefit Luncheon

Sunday, May 17, 2009
Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe, Teaneck, NJ

Join us as we pay tribute to Guests of Honor Rochelle Hirsch and Naava Parker and Lisa Altman Volunteer Tribute Award Recipient Suffy Rudman at Sharsheret's Annual Benefit Luncheon.



Rochelle Hirsch



Naava Parker



Suffy Rudman

Team Sharsheret Reaches Winner's Circle Again!



Award-winning Team Sharsheret at New York City's Race for the Cure in Central Park.

Powered by more than 700 volunteers, friends, and family members, Team Sharsheret joined thousands in New York City's Central Park to participate in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, a monumental breast cancer fundraising and awareness event held in September 2008. For the third consecutive year, Sharsheret was recognized as the largest community team at the Race and raised over \$60,000 for Komen. "700 people on the Team is a terrific accomplishment!" said Team Sharsheret Guardian and Med-Pat President Sam Zagha. "Sharsheret should be proud of what has been achieved at this event in addition to all that has been done in putting Sharsheret at the forefront of Jewish organizations confronting breast cancer."

Team Sharsheret 2008 thanks the more than 60 companies and organizations who joined Sharsheret in the fight against breast

cancer, including: *Design By Flora, Med-Pat, Inc., The Schachter and Greenberg Families, Amoena USA, Campmor, Inc., Carly Hirschberg and Friends, CCG MetaMedia Inc., EMCO Plumbing, Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, Geller & Company LLC, Glatt Express, Lucille Roberts, Perry Chemical Corp., Propane Power Corporation, Yeshiva University Stern College for Women, 3nom, Abeles and*

Heymann, Best Friends Forever, Debbie and Michael Blumenthal, JH Darbie & Co., Kushner Companies, Leasco, Lisa Altman Foundation, Magen David Yeshiva High School, Michael Strauss Silversmiths, Noah's Ark Delicatessen and Shelly's Dairy Restaurant and Café, Pediatric Occupational Therapy Services, Pinzette Glassworks, Ramaz Upper School, Robin Taback Music Memorial Fund, Shuly Wigs in conjunction with World of Goodies, Supersol Kosher Supermarkets, and Suzanne Breast Care Boutique.

Join Team Sharsheret in Your Community!

Celebrate a special occasion, honor a survivor, or remember a loved one by participating in a local breast cancer race or walk. To learn more about organizing Team Sharsheret for an event in your community and to order Team Sharsheret t-shirts, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail events@sharsheret.org.



Avrumi (left) and Shlomo Bram.



(Left to right): Elana Silber, Sharon Herenstein, and Rebecca Schwartz.



(Left to right): Board Member Nikki Sausen, Shulamit Holzer, Yael Schulhof, and Melissa Keiser.



Team Sharsheret at Race for the Cure in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Team Sharsheret at Race for the Cure in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sharsheret Expands National Volunteer Program

Sharsheret's **National Volunteer Program** provides exciting opportunities for individuals and groups to get involved in the organization and help spread the word about Sharsheret's programs and services across the country. Sharsheret recently expanded the National Volunteer Program to include the National Advisory Board, a coalition of dedicated leadership volunteers who serve as liaisons to the staff and Board of Directors. National Advisory Board members contribute to Sharsheret's national growth by raising awareness and serving as the Sharsheret point of contact in their local region. Sharsheret is now recruiting National Advisory Board members from the following areas: **AL, AK, AR, CA (San Diego and San Francisco), CO, DE, GA, HI, ID, IL, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MI, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ (Central), NM, NY (Long Island and Westchester), ND, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WV, WI, and WY.**

If you live in any of these states and would like to learn more about joining the National Advisory Board and Volunteer Program, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.



(Left to right): Manager of Volunteer Services Rebecca Schwartz presents awards to Volunteers Suzanna Breit (Fort Lee, New Jersey), Sharon Wieder (Teaneck, New Jersey), and Sharona Schochet (Teaneck, New Jersey) at the 2008 Volunteer Center of Bergen County "Celebrate Volunteers" recognition event.



Nira Berry of Potomac, Maryland describes her experience as a Sharsheret Volunteer and National Advisory Board Member.

In the spring of 2002, I was finishing my chemotherapy, grappling with the thought of additional surgery, and trying to figure out how to keep my kids busy. A kind person referred me to Sharsheret and it was the best phone call I ever made. Sharsheret connected me with my Link, another young Jewish woman who helped

me by relating to what I was going through. Hearing about her experience helped me tremendously. Such a simple concept, yet it was so helpful and meaningful in my life at that particular moment. I knew there were so many young Jewish women just like me diagnosed with breast cancer who needed the same help from someone else who's been there, done that. I wanted to help, too. As soon as I finished my treatment and surgeries, I called Sharsheret and said, "Sign me up!" I immediately became a Link, a very rewarding volunteer position, yet I felt I wanted to do more. I set up a meeting with Sharsheret's Founder Rochelle Shoretz to discuss expanding Sharsheret's reach down to the Washington, DC area.

As a Sharsheret volunteer, I organized and chaired two breast cancer educational conferences for young Jewish women. The conferences provided speakers and interactive groups and presented the latest breast cancer prevention, detection, and survivorship information. Over 400 women attended these conferences.

For the past six years, I have also organized and captained Team Sharsheret in the Maryland Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure; contacted local hospitals, doctors, Jewish and cancer organizations to spread the word about Sharsheret; and hosted Sharsheret fundraisers. I also serve as Sharsheret's National Advisory Board representative in the Washington, DC area, where I speak at events, such as the University of Maryland Sharsheret fundraiser, lead my LaughingRx laughter yoga group to promote Sharsheret, plan parlor meetings, and distribute Sharsheret information materials to the too many women who are newly diagnosed. I was particularly interested in serving on Sharsheret's National Advisory Board because Sharsheret serves as a strong support and breast cancer education resource for these young Jewish women when they need it the most, when they are fighting breast cancer. As a Sharsheret National Advisory Board member, I am able to help do what I feel is so important – bring Sharsheret to the attention of all Jewish women and organizations, so when young Jewish women need help, they will know where to get it."

Sharsheret Volunteers Make a Difference

Alana Riss Fine of Minneapolis, Minnesota, describes her experience as a Sharsheret Volunteer.



"I have a friend who keeps me up to date on all the latest news about our mutual friends. She used to fill me in on who got married, who had a baby, or who got a great job. However, there was a period of time when her updates were about college friends or her family members who were diagnosed with cancer. Although she is such a close friend, I was apprehensive whenever I saw her number on my caller ID, worried about what news I would hear. But then, the tone of the calls changed and the news became more upbeat. She told me about her friend, Rochelle Shoretz, who founded Sharsheret and the many inspiring women who volunteer their time and efforts to support this organization.

When I moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, I decided to join these women in their efforts and formally introduce Sharsheret to my new community. To date, we have hosted a parlor meeting in a private home; organized Team Sharsheret at Race for the Cure (see photo on page 9); been written up in the local Jewish newspaper; and represented Sharsheret at a community education and awareness event. I have been referred to as 'the Sharsheret lady,' a title I am proud to hold because it means that people know about Sharsheret and its mission to support all young Jewish women facing breast cancer. As a psychologist, I have always understood how important organizations like Sharsheret are for women. Despite this knowledge, I am still amazed at how rewarding it has been for me, personally, to be involved in such a worthy cause."

Bat and Bar Mitzvah Program

Kids across the country are making a difference in the lives of young Jewish women facing breast cancer by including Sharsheret in their Bat and Bar Mitzvah celebrations. Sharsheret's **Bat and Bar Mitzvah Program** offers many exciting opportunities, including collecting cosmetics and toys for Sharsheret's **Quality of Life Programs**, organizing community activities and events, and spreading the word about Sharsheret to local health care professionals and hospitals.



Kira Dennis (Hollywood, Florida) coordinated a community Shavuot Cake and Flower sale as well as a class for women on Megilat Ruth and raised nearly \$8,000 in support of Sharsheret's national programs and services.

Goldi Weiser (New Rochelle, New York), daughter of Sharsheret Board Member Lauryn Weiser, dedicated her Bat Mitzvah celebration to helping children whose mothers are facing breast cancer. Goldi and her party guests packaged craft projects that are included in Sharsheret Busy Boxes, sent to families nationwide.



Celebrate with Sharsheret!

Include Sharsheret in your celebration. For more information about Sharsheret's **Bat and Bar Mitzvah Program**, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.



Julie (left) and Emmy Cohen (Elkins Park, Pennsylvania) hosted a display table and distributed Sharsheret materials at a local women's health event and also collected cosmetics for Sharsheret's Best Face Forward program.



Julia Rosenblatt (third from left) (Hartsdale, New York) organized Team Sharsheret at the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in Central Valley, New York.

Sharsheret On Campus

Student Outreach Efforts Raise Awareness Nationwide

Students from AEPi Sorority, Hillel, Chabad and other Jewish organizations on college campuses, BBYO, and Jewish day and high schools nationwide coordinate breast cancer outreach events and fundraising initiatives in support of Sharsheret. Their enthusiasm in partnering with Sharsheret to educate their peers about breast care, appropriate breast cancer screening methods, and Sharsheret's national programs is contagious. "We are making a big impact on campus raising awareness about breast cancer and Sharsheret," said a student from the University of Tulane. Staff members on campus also support Sharsheret's education and outreach initiatives. "I personally have a connection to Sharsheret as they are an organization that I have seen help many women," said Naomi Kohl,

Torah Educator at the University of Maryland Hillel. Campus outreach efforts have expanded to include not only students, but alumnae as well.

Sharsheret recently received a call for support from a Jewish woman living in Mexico who was diagnosed with breast cancer. She learned about Sharsheret from her niece, an AEPi sorority alum now living in Florida, who encouraged her to contact Sharsheret. "What our organization (AEPi) found so great, amongst all the positive things Sharsheret does, is that it acts as a sisterhood of support for those going through breast cancer. Like a sisterhood, it provides people with comfort, motivation, and strength," said a student from the University of Central Florida.



BBYO members enjoyed baking pink challah at their Breast Cancer Awareness Event in Newton Upper Falls, Massachusetts.



University of Iowa AEPi Sorority created the Link Olympics Team to benefit Sharsheret.



University of Maryland Hillel hosted Manicure for the Cure to benefit Sharsheret.



Ellen Kleinhaus (left) and Lauren Reinfeld at the Hillel Professional Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.



(Left to right): Rachel Weber, Chana Tolchin, and Margot Reinstein of Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls coordinated Heartbeats: A Night of Song, Dance, and Connection in Teaneck, New Jersey.



(Left to right): Dr. Ditzza Berger, Molly Steinblatt, Tali Herenstein, and Miriam Wallach at the HAFTR high school Breast Health Awareness: You Can Make a Difference event in Cedarhurst, New York.



University of Massachusetts AEPi Sorority collected toys for Sharsheret's Busy Box program.

Sema Heller-Netivot Shalom Summer Internship

Sharsheret is now accepting applications from college and social work students interested in the **Sema Heller-Netivot Shalom Internship** for the summer of 2009. Summer interns will contribute to Sharsheret's core programs supporting young Jewish women facing breast cancer. Responsibilities will include research, data entry, outreach, and project coordination. Resumes with cover letters should be sent via e-mail to resumes@sharsheret.org and should include a schedule of availability for interviews.

The Sema Heller-Netivot Shalom Internship program is supported by a scholarship fund established by the friends and family of Sema Heller, a New Jersey mother of two who lost her battle to breast cancer in 2004.



(Left to right): Sam Heller, 2008 summer interns Rachel Straus, Ahuva Furst, and Miriam Brukner.

Family and Friends Establish Sharsheret Jewels

Family members and friends of Jewish women facing breast cancer have established Jewels in Sharsheret's national chain of programs and services. Working closely with Sharsheret's staff, loved ones have identified meaningful programs that are in need of support. Sharsheret is grateful to the following benefactors who have enhanced Sharsheret with a Jewel:



Pink Diamond

Sherry and Neil Cohen
Kaminer Family
Dr. Ethan Wasserman & Family



Sapphire

Sam Heller and Family
Hirsch and Parker Families



Diamond

Charnoff and Katz Families



Ruby

Anonymous
June and Terry Aranoff
Baskin, Godfrey, & Kahane Families



Emerald

Brenda and Elihu Turkel

For more information about establishing a Sharsheret Jewel in honor or in memory of a loved one, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

Our Thanks

We wish to acknowledge the many foundations and organizations that supported Sharsheret this year.

Arthur and Madeline
Millman Family Foundation

Barbara and Edward Schlusel Foundation

Brad Meltzer and Cori Flam
Charitable Foundation Trust

David Berg Foundation

Edwin and Shirley Woldar Foundation

Greater New York City Affiliate
of Susan G. Komen For The Cure

Heidi Paoli Fund

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Polinger Family Foundation

Jewish Community Youth Foundation

Kaminer Foundation

Keren Yitzchak Foundation, Inc.

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Lucius N. Littauer Foundation

Mark and Joan Warshaw Charitable Fund

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New Kalman Sunshine Fund

New York Life Foundation

North Jersey Affiliate
of Susan G. Komen For The Cure

Philippe Citron Charitable
Foundation Trust

Russell Berrie Foundation

Schaeffer Family Foundation

Young Survival Coalition

Community Connections

Through the **Education and Outreach Program**, Sharsheret representatives attend conferences and participate in programs in an effort to educate the public about the unique concerns of young Jewish women facing breast cancer. Outreach events held in community centers, synagogues, and private homes across the country also provide meaningful opportunities for Sharsheret to reach women in diverse communities and to raise necessary support. Heartfelt thanks to all of Sharsheret's hosts and their event committees.



Jacksonville, Florida: Volunteer Suzanna Breit (second from left) meets attendees at the Young Survival Coalition and Living Beyond Breast Cancer Annual Conference for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer.



Brooklyn, New York: Sari Setton (left) and Linda Eber at Sharsheret's Symposium, "Breast Cancer Genetics and the Sephardic Jewish Woman."



Englewood, New Jersey: Shera Dubitsky (left) and Rachel Dube of Englewood Hospital at the Jewish Genetic Diseases symposium hosted by Englewood Hospital and Medical Center.



New York City: Lisa Rockman greets guest Alice Silverstein (left) at a women's tea she hosted in support of Sharsheret.

Interested in Bringing Sharsheret to Your Community?

Consider hosting or organizing a Sharsheret event in your home or neighborhood. Sharsheret representatives are available to speak about breast care and breast cancer in the Jewish community at conferences, lectures, fundraisers, and other community events.

To learn more, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail events@sharsheret.org.



Tarrytown, New York: Volunteers Sari Stein (left) and Adrienne Burgher at the Areyvut B'nai Mitzvah Fair.



Woodbury, New York (left to right): Annette Schottenfeld, Ilyssa Lipton, Rochelle Shoretz, Linda Nudelman, Dr. Jane Swedler, and Paul Woldar at the Woodbury Jewish Center's education and outreach event in support of Sharsheret sponsored by the Woldar family.



Washington Township, New Jersey (left to right): Ellen Kleinhaus, Elana Silber, Melanie Harada of Lee-Nolan Associates - an agency of MassMutual, Temple Beth Or Sisterhood President Lisa Schreiber, and Tishya Signorelli of the law firm Cole Shotz, Meisel, Forman and Leonard, P.A. at the Temple Beth Or Sisterhood's financial seminar for women held in honor of Sharsheret.

Sharsheret Resource Series Educates Thousands Nationwide

Sharsheret's culturally-sensitive **Resource Series**, "Facing Breast Cancer as a Jewish Woman," has become the basis for Sharsheret's **Education and Outreach Program**. Resource Series booklets are mailed to Jewish women, their families, and friends and educate thousands of Jewish community leaders and health care professionals across the country about the unique concerns of young Jewish women facing breast cancer in an effort to help them provide a higher quality of support to their congregants and patients. Resource Series booklets include:

- *Facing Breast Cancer as a Jewish Woman*
- *Facing Breast Cancer as an Orthodox Jewish Woman*
- *Breast Cancer Genetics and the Jewish Woman*
- *The Jewish Family Facing Breast Cancer*
- *Our Voices: Inspiring Words from the Women of Sharsheret*



To order your free booklets from Sharsheret's Resource Series, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

How Sharsheret Can Help!

In response to the needs of the young women we serve, Sharsheret has developed the following programs and services:

The Link Program, including a peer support network connecting young women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences, **Empower** for women without partners, **Embrace** for women living with advanced breast cancer, **Family Focus** for caregivers, family members, and friends, and **Genetics for Life** to address concerns about hereditary breast cancer.

Education and Outreach Programs, including **Sharsheret on Campus** for high school and college students, the **National Volunteer Program** with representatives in states across the country,

the **Sharsheret Supports** model for local support groups, *Facing Breast Cancer as a Jewish Woman* **Resource Series Booklets**, and **Health Care Symposia** to explore the concerns of young women facing breast cancer.

Quality of Life Programs, including the **Busy Box** for young parents facing breast cancer and **Best Face Forward** to address the cosmetic side effects of treatment.

For more information about Sharsheret's programs and services, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.

Pillows of Support

Sharsheret's **Quality of Life Programs** offer services to women undergoing breast cancer surgery and treatment. Included in these services is the *Pillow of Support*, delivered following a hospital stay. The *Pillow of Support*, a crisp white neckroll pillow with embroidered scalloped edges, adds a beautiful touch to any bedroom, providing emotional and physical support to women facing breast cancer.



After undergoing surgery for breast cancer, Dr. Patricia Cayne of New York City received a similar pillow as a gift from a close friend. She used it to prop up her arm post-surgery and took comfort in its simple beauty. She found the pillow useful during her recovery and she was determined to share this gift with other women battling breast cancer. Five years ago, Dr. Cayne established the *Pillow of Support* at Sharsheret, and generously donates the beautiful pillows sent to the women in Sharsheret's program following surgery.

Sharsheret often receives letters from women thanking Dr. Cayne for their *Pillows of Support* and describing how meaningful her gift is to them:

"The Pillow of Support is both beautiful and invaluable. I commend the creator of the program and hope that I may help perpetuate it."

"I received your beautiful pillow. It really warmed my heart. Besides for being so useful and decorative, it serves as a reminder that I am not alone."

For More Information About Sharsheret

Write

1086 Teaneck Road, Suite 3A
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Visit

www.sharsheret.org and Sharsheret's
Facebook page at www.facebook.com

Call

(866) 474-2774

E-mail

info@sharsheret.org

Are you on our e-mail list?

*If not, you may be missing the latest
updates and bulletins from Sharsheret.
Please e-mail us at info@sharsheret.org
to join our e-mail list.*

Breast Cancer Navigation Flowchart: Understanding Your Pathology Report

A diagnosis of breast cancer can be overwhelming and the pathology report describing the diagnosis often includes terminology that is difficult to understand. "Sharsheret's new Breast Cancer Navigation Flowchart was developed not only to help women newly diagnosed with breast cancer and their families understand their pathology report, but also to be used as a springboard for questions as they consider their treatment options," said Director of Operations Elana Silber. The Navigation Flowchart will be available to women newly diagnosed with breast cancer, their families, and the healthcare professionals who care for them.

To order copies of the Breast Cancer Navigation Flowchart, call toll-free (866) 474-2774 or e-mail info@sharsheret.org.



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